

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

Greene County, Missouri 2004

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“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”

Lao-tzu

FOREWORD

The state of the community's health consists of more than the mere presence or absence of disease. Many social, economic, environmental, and lifestyle behavior factors present in Greene County contribute to the health status of residents and visitors. Because of this, it is important to periodically assess the current health status and disease trends that have developed over time. The collection, analysis, and dissemination of health data are critical to the improvement of public health. This process helps to identify issues and problems in the community so a better understanding of what is occurring can be obtained. The community health assessment process is a vital component of public health efforts that contribute to a healthy community by guiding strategic planning.

This community health assessment is an extension of the first *State of the Community's Health* report completed in 1996 by the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. The initial work provided the foundation for many programs and initiatives in the community. Since 1996, the health department has published annual community health report cards. In 2002, a larger environmental health assessment was published which has been followed by an annual environmental health report card. The 2004 community health assessment was completed through the collection and analysis of secondary data collected by many federal, state, and local agencies. Additionally, an original countywide survey, which focused on behavioral risk factors, was conducted during the spring of 2004. This community health survey helped to partially alleviate the lack of available county-specific data. However, health data for many issues facing our community continues to be fragmented and difficult to obtain.

This report represents the initial step in assessing the community's health. Community leaders, organizations, and planners will begin to discuss issues raised by the information presented in order to prioritize those issues that should be addressed and to identify needed tasks. In addition, the residents of Greene County should review this information so that suggestions for improvement can be made and comments can be shared with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department.

Each of the chapters in this assessment begins with a "Did You Know?" section that provides quick facts and figures pertaining to the material presented in the chapter. At the end of each chapter, a reference sheet of data sources is provided for further examination of issues. Additionally, there are other resources on our website including a bulletin board where we hope community dialogue and discussion on these issues will take place.

The easy part of this process is completing the initial assessment document. The more difficult part of the process is putting this data to work and addressing the health disparities and burdens that affect our community. Fortunately, this process is also the most rewarding. It is a credit to this community that we have a heritage of collaboration and innovation when it comes to addressing health related problems. I have every confidence that the next decade will see our community continue in that tradition. We believe that through hard work and dedication there are no limits to what our community can do.

Kevin S. Gipson
Director, Springfield-Greene County Health Department

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The Kitchen Incorporated

The Missouri Foundation For Health

“Now, I say to you today my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'”

Martin Luther King Jr.,

“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.”

John F. Kennedy

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself. ”

Eleanor Roosevelt

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“If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest
rather than intellect. “

Benjamin Franklin